

## RECORD OF CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION

- A. Proposed Action:** Western Area Power Administration (Western) Desert Southwest Region plans to conduct emergency replacement of the overhead ground wire, which contains a fiber optic line, between Structures 11/3 and 11/5 on the Mead Marketplace 500-kV Transmission Line located southwest of Boulder City, Clark County, Nevada. The fiber optic line is damaged beyond repair and is no longer able to transmit commands and relay metering data necessary for the safe and reliable operation of the bulk electric system. Based on the condition of the fiber optic cable shown in **Figures 1 and 2**, a safety issue exists for anyone in the right-of-way.

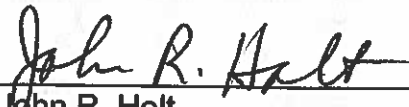
The replacement work entails using bucket trucks, crew trucks, cranes, and a helicopter to remove the fiber optic line between Structures 11/3 and 11/5 and install a new line with a dead-end configuration. A helicopter may be used to hold or fly in the fiber optic line; it will be based at a nearby airport, and will not need to land at or near the project area. If access roads are impassable or if the ground surface in the work area is uneven, Western will use bulldozer, backhoe, grader, front end loader or a combination of this equipment to create a safe level working surface.

The project area is located east of US 95 and south of US 93 near Boulder City, Clark County, Nevada (**Figure 3**). It occurs in Sections 29 and 30 in Township 23 South, Range 64 East on the Mount Diablo Baseline and Meridian. It occurs at the north end of Eldorado Valley. Western owns the land.

Western plans to begin this work during the week of January 25, 2010, and it is expected to take three business days to complete.

- B. Categorical Exclusion Applied:** 10 CFR, Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B, B4.7: "Adding fiber optic cable to transmission structures or burying fiber optic cable in an existing transmission line rights-of-way."
- C. Regulatory Requirements in 10 CFR 1021.410 (b):**
- a. The proposed action fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix B to Subpart D.
    - i. The proposed action was reviewed for the requirements of the Endangered Species Act, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the National Historic Preservation Act, and all applicable Department of Energy Orders.
    - ii. The proposed action does not require the siting, construction, or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities.

- iii. The proposed action does not disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that pre-exist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled and unpermitted releases.
  - iv. The proposed action was reviewed and surveyed for impacts to cultural and sensitive biological resources. Cultural and sensitive biological resources have been determined to not be affected.
- b. There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; and
- c. The proposal is not "connected" to other actions with potentially significant impacts, is not related to other proposed actions with cumulatively significant impacts, and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or 10 CFR 1021.211.
- D. **Determination:** Based on my review of information conveyed to me and in my possession (or attached) concerning the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (as authorized under DOE Order 451.1A), I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class of actions, the other regulatory requirements set forth above are met, and the proposed action is hereby categorically excluded from further NEPA review.
- E. **Special Conditions:**
- a. A qualified biologist will survey the area immediately (within 24 hours) prior to starting work in order to identify any tortoises or suspected tortoise-occupied burrows that may be present and devise an avoidance strategy.
  - b. A qualified biologist will monitor the work to look for tortoises that may enter the project area and to assist with the implementation of an avoidance strategy.
  - c. If a tortoise is observed in the project area, all work within 50 feet of the tortoise will cease until the tortoise leaves the project area of its own accord.
  - d. Western will conduct a tortoise awareness training session for the crew to remind them of common tortoise avoidance practices.
  - e. Disturbance or damage to native desert vegetation will be minimized to the extent possible.

  
John R. Holt  
NEPA Compliance Officer

1/21/10  
Date



**Figure 1. Damaged Overhead Ground Wire at Structure 11/4, facing down.**



**Figure 2. Damaged Overhead Ground Wire at Structure 11/4, facing northeast.**

Figure 3. Project Area Location.

